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DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
DATE 6-17-81

"The total membership of the House of Commons is 630.

Status of the House at the General Election, 1959		Today
Conservative	365	360
Labour	258	256
Liberal	6	7
Independent	1	2
Speaker of the House	Not counted	1
Deputies	Not counted	2
Seats Vacant	0	2
	630	630

Members of Parliament receive £1000 per annum, plus £ 750 for expenses. Tax is payable on the £1000. They also receive 24 sheets of stationery a day and first class rail accommodation between their constituencies and London. They are permitted free telephone calls within London but not outside. No franking privileges are granted or other transportation expenses.

Each Cabinet Minister continues to receive £ 750 for his constituency expenses and their salaries are as follows:

Prime Minister	£ 10,000	(part of which is tax-free)
Cabinet Ministers	5,000	
Ministers of State	3,750	
Parliamentary Secretaries	2,500	
The Speaker	5,000	(Has official residence, tax exempt.)
Deputy Speaker	3,250	(All three receive £ 750
Deputy Chairman	2,500	expenses)

The usual term of office after a General Election is 5 full years, but few Governments wish to extend their terms that long. Since the war, General Elections have been held in 1945, 1950, 1951, 1955, 1959.

The British Parliamentary Committee system bears no relation to the American. The entire House can sit as a committee on a Bill. There is also the Committee of Grievances which receives petitions. There are standing committees such as the Committee of Privileges which receive complaints against non-members and decides upon action to be taken; the Committee of Public Accounts which examines the accounts of Parliamentary appropriations for public expenditure; the Committee of Selection which nominates the other standing committees and a number of committees for Private Bills; the Committee of Supply which considers and approves all estimates; the Committee of Ways and Means which authorizes taxes."

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December 23, 1962 - Sunday

David and I left, on this cold, clear morning, by Piedmont Airlines, for Lynchburg, with an intermediate stop at Richmond. Tneir old Fairchild two-engined props still function; the trip takes 1-1/2 hours. At Lynchburg, we picked up a Hertz rental car at ten dollars a day, plus seven cents a mile, plus seven dollars for cc ..sion insurance. It was a new Chevrolet, so we sped featly to Staunton Hill in an hour. The place looked lovely. E, Sasha and Nicky arrived by a later plane in time for a ..ied chicken dinner, prepared by that master cook Elizabeth.

December 24, 1962 - Monday

Sash and I went to Charlotte Court House this morning. I was intent on seeing the Court House, allegedly designed by Thomas Jefferson, to the renovation of which I had contributed. I thought the work excellently done.

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We ran into Page Morton; with him, we visited the Presbyterian Church, also newly burnished. It is simple, but attractive. We then went to Page's house for a chat with Gladys, their daughter Margaret, and Gladys's father.

On the way home, we stopped to see the Chermsides. They were, if not exactly blooming in their eighties, satisfactorily spry. I told them of my hope that Mrs. Twombly's marble statues of Roman Emperors, now in the Public Library garden, might be moved to the shelter of the Court House. They are deteriorating under outdoor conditions.

We all played poker tonight, a game the children love. The stakes were modest; Nicky was the largest winner, with a toll of forty cents.

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